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TAGS: [EAID](#) [PHUM](#) [SCUL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MU](#)  
SUBJECT: DEMOCRACY STRATEGY AND GOALS: OMAN

REF: A. 07 MUSCAT 949  
[1](#)B. 07 STATE 130991

Classified By: NEA DAS Kent Patton for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) The Department approves Embassy Muscat,s proposed democracy strategy for the next twelve to eighteen months as discussed on May 6 via video conference. This cable summarizes the new strategy, which is an update to Embassy Muscat,s previous democracy strategy (ref A).

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UPDATED DEMOCRACY STRATEGY  
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[1](#)2. (C) Embassy Muscat identified four reform areas for the upcoming twelve to eighteen months: civil society and labor unions, representative parliament, women,s participation in governance, and judicial reform and training.

[1](#)3. (C) Objective 1: Labor unions represent Oman,s best chance for the development of truly independent and active civil society organizations. Implementation Strategy:

-- Develop capacity of the newly registered 40 plus labor unions as they organize and prepare for national labor union leadership elections, which may occur before Ramadan.

-- Utilize public diplomacy programming, including IVLP, to advance capacity-building within labor unions and to assist the government in creating the legal and regulatory environment to help unions develop and operate independently.

-- Once approved by the independent General Federation, expand scope of work for Solidarity Center to support union growth and development and provide technical assistance and training on elections and outreach skills. Utilize regional training centers and programs based outside Oman for such assistance when applicable and when lead time is sufficient for Omani governmental approval.

[1](#)4. (C) Objective 2: Increase independence and power of a representative parliament. Implementation Strategy:

-- Provide technical training to newly elected members of lower house of parliament, the Majlis al-Shura, elected in [1](#)2007. The International Republican Institute has conducted technical training for staff and members and should continue its efforts.

-- Support and encourage the expansion of the Majlis al-Shura,s legislative responsibilities through dialogue with high-level Omani officials and capacity building for the Majlis.

[1](#)5. (C) Objective 3: Expand women,s participation in governance. Implementation Strategy:

-- Once the Ministry of Social Development,s needs assessment for a new program aimed at empowering Omani women

is complete, evaluate the report and determine approach to support the program.

-- Utilize public diplomacy programming, including exchange visits, study opportunities, speaker/specialist programs, and skills training to continue to promote women,s participation in all aspects of Omani society.

-- Initiate discussion with Omani officials, pending results of the MSD,s needs assessment, regarding campaign training for women in the next elections, particularly in light of no women being elected to parliament in 2007.

-- Expand training for Oman Women,s Associations utilizing MEPI small grants funding.

¶6. (C) Objective 4: Promote judicial reform and training. Implementation Strategy:

-- Utilize additional technical assistance through American Bar Association to develop capacity within the independent judiciary.

-- Promote the creation of bench books covering different aspects of Omani law, starting with labor law, and provide associated training to judges to help them understand legal precedents and adjudicate labor and other disputes with greater consistency.

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POINT OF CONTACT  
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¶7. (SBU) Please contact NEA/PI Charles Kiamie at (202) 776-8841 or KiamieCE@state.sgov.gov for any necessary further background information.  
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